

**Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results Program
(AMIR 2.0 Program)**

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Public Awareness – e-government Focus Groups

Final Report

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1. Introduction

A core function of the Ministry is assisting the modernization of Government, through its “Jordan e-Government Program”. A roadmap and blueprint have been completed identifying the program’s main building blocks and prioritizing them for the next five years. Implementation is the next step. Targeted e-government projects are already being implemented, with the first services, including online business registration and applying for communications licenses. The MoICT is in need of starting to build knowledge and awareness about the e-Government Program. A focused communications strategy will be completed for the e-Government Program to include messages for various audiences of e-Government. The first focused audience group will be the internal government staff at the various ministries expected to begin e-Government initiatives. To initiate a complete communications strategy, the MoICT will need to understand the current perceptions and understanding of the staff on the topic of e-Government.

In response, this study gathers data on current level of awareness and understanding of government employees on the e-Government Program through six focus groups conducted with government employees at the upper, middle, and lower management levels. The Objective of this study is to:

- Assess the understanding of the targeted clientele on e-government
- Measure the awareness on e-government
- Evaluate the perception on the e-government program
- Obtain suggestions on how to increase awareness and raise the perception on e-Government

2. Methodology

Preparation of the discussion protocol

In order to prepare the protocol of the themes of discussion of the focus group sessions, several meetings took place with concerned key persons to gather their needs and requirements as to what the study should tackle.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
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| • Emile Cubeisy | Director of ICT Promotion Department-MoICT |
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| • Amna Kilani | Head of Change Management |
| • Catherine Goddard | AMIR Program |
| • Dr. Nabil Fayoumi | Training Specialist MoICT |

Based on the input of the above persons, the protocol was developed, reviewed by MoICT and approved. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the protocol.

Preparation for the Focus Group Sessions

Six focus group sessions were held at the Radisson SAS Hotel with employees from 22 different governmental and para-governmental organizations, who were invited to attend the sessions.

- 2 with upper level management employees – Held on August 1st and 8th, 2002
- 2 with mid level management employees – Held on July 30th and August 7th, 2002
- 2 with lower level management employees– Held on July 31st and August 6th, 2002

These organizations were:

1. Public Security
2. Sales Tax Department
3. Internal Revenue Tax Department
4. Customs Department
5. JEDCO
6. Industrial Estates Corporation
7. Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
8. Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology
9. Greater Amman Municipality
10. Capital Markets – Securities Department
11. Central Bank of Jordan
12. National Library
13. Social Security Corporation
14. Department of Statistics
15. Department of Lands and Survey
16. Jordan Investment Board
17. Ministry of Industry and Trade
18. Ministry of Public Works and Housing
19. Ministry of Finance
20. Ministry of Planning
21. National Information Center

Each focus group required a specific sample of a minimum of 9 attendees who were selected as follows:

- 1- The e-government program coordinator at each of the above organizations was contacted, informed of the study, and his cooperation in obtaining the list of the employees' names at each level of management was elicited.
- 2- Employees were then randomly picked from the received lists.
- 3- Each selected employee was then contacted by telephone, invited to attend and informed of the study's objectives, and location and date of the session.
- 4- The government program coordinator was then informed of the selected employees' names, and his/her help was appreciated in reminding the employees of his department, one day before the session date.

3. Focus Group Comparative Results

The following sections present the main captured points that are indicative of the prevalent knowledge, awareness, and perception of e-government among the employees at the three levels of management, upper, middle, and lower, in the different Jordanian governmental and para-governmental institutions participating in the study. The highlights and concerns of employees at each level are presented per theme of discussion to allow for comparative perusal and analysis.

The detailed discussions of each focus group are presented in Appendix B.

3.1 Discussion Theme 1: Knowledge

What do you know about e-Government?

What do you understand e-Government to be?

What is your “non-expert” definition of e-Government?

Where did you get your knowledge about e-Government?

A) Upper Management Employees

Knowledge of most of the upper management employees' of e-Government can be rated as very good. In general, the moderators could detect that most participants have a good grasp of the actual mechanisms of e-government and know how it is in actual practice as well as what it is in the theoretical sense. They hooked it to administrative reform and streamlining of operations, need for precision in information recording, archiving and information sharing, and for secure networking of organizations.

The following are some of their precise definitions:

- E-Government is the ability to perform electronic “paperless” transactions or obtain information or services, without physical presence, efficiently, speedily, accurately, and reliably through Internet.
- E-Government includes several tracks Government-to-Government (G2G), Government to Business (G2B), and Government to Citizens (G2C).
- A method of information acquisition over the Internet whereby a citizen could get information, conducts any transaction, or obtains a service without having to go to the departments and thus avoids red-tape.
- E-Government is the use of computers in all actions linking citizens and government and an accurate documentation of information by date and time.
- E-Government promotes administrative reform, offering more accurate censorship over transactions and the ability to track and measure per employee the time each transaction takes from start to end, in order to identify weaknesses in the management system and to find the necessary solutions.

Participants stated that they gained their knowledge about e-Government through:

- Colleagues in their own departments (especially those participating in project implementation);
- Media (TV, Radio, Newspapers);
- At seminars they attended abroad, other training courses.

- By practice, reported by those participants whose department is implementing Intranet solutions, e-business, and full/partial computerization. These being JEDCO, Customs, Industrial Estate Corporation, Department of Land and Survey, Securities Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, and NIC.

B) Middle Management Employees

Knowledge of the Jordanian mid-level management Government employees of e-Government can be rated as good. In general, participants have the correct idea of e-government being an electronic connections among the governmental organizations and it being based on Internet technology, as well as being a tool for increasing productivity, providing accurate information, and better service to customers at less effort and in a timely and economic manner. But the general sense of their conveyed knowledge of e-government was concentrated on its expected effects and the theoretical requirements and purposes rather than on its actual mechanism. From their provided definitions, the moderators could detect that very few actually have an idea of how it is in actual practice. Also, few of the participants had no knowledge at all of e-government.

The following are some of the reported aspects:

- E-Government is the electronic connecting of government departments – it is the government of the current times
- It is making use of technology for work development
- I have no knowledge what-so-ever of e-government
- It is information sharing among government organization
- It is serving citizens effortlessly and simplifying procedures
- It is serving the citizen over the internet in order to eliminate bureaucracy

Participating employees from organizations implementing computerized activities such as NIC, and JIB had better knowledge of e-government. One pointed out that e-government requires that: citizens are computer literate, have computers and Internet access; another reported the need for a secure network that allows employees to send emails and perform transactions among different departments.

In the opinion of some participants, e-government is not complicated and its implementation in Jordan is important and is not ‘another issue that Jordan is mimicking the western countries in’.

Participants stated that they gained their knowledge about e-Government:

- a- Informally, through discussions among employees of their own departments;
- b- Formally, through their department’s e-Government project managers;
- c- Through the media (TV, Radio, Newspapers);
- d- By practice, reported by those participants whose department is implementing an Intranet solutions, e-business, and full/partial computerization. These being JEDCO, Customs, Industrial Estate Corporation, Sales Tax Department, NIC, and JIB.
- e- By example of Dubai e-Government, UK sales tax system.

C) Lower Management Employees

Knowledge of the lower-level management employees of e-Government can be rated as fair. More participants did not have a clear idea of what it is all about. In general, their conveyed knowledge of e-government was concentrated on it being computerized activities within their departments, and an Internet based electronic connection among governments and mostly used to publish information to citizens. The few who thought of it as being a tool for providing different services to customers over the Internet were employees who have interaction with the implemented computerized processes at their organizations such as JEDCO, Public Security, Central Bank, and JIB.

The following are some of the reported aspects:

- An alternative quick method for obtaining information and statistics about Jordan or about any service provided by any department through the Internet without having to actually visit that department.
- A method to increase investment inside and outside the country by reducing paper transactions and simplifying work.
- A way to implement laws and regulations in a simplified manner and to reduce time, effort, and money, since Internet transactions are faster and more effective than having to stand in line at any department.
- A system made up of a human element and an electronic element, whereby the human element enters information on the machine.
- It is the translation of the term “electronic” as meaning speed and accuracy of communication; very similar to mobiles that reach you anywhere in one second.
- A network tying all Ministries and Institutions together and with their employees, and the start of the end of paper.

Lower level Government Employees stated that they gained their knowledge about e-Government through: their own work; their departments; their studies and personal interest; and through the media (TV, Radio, Newspapers).

3.2 Discussion Theme 2: Awareness

Are you aware of the current e-Government program being implemented in Jordan?

What effect do you think this program will have on Jordan?

What effect do you think this program will have on your organization's work?

What effect do you think this program will have on your work?

Why do you think the decision was made for Jordan to adopt an e-government program?

A) Upper Management Employees

Participants have satisfactory awareness of the e-Government program that is being implemented in Jordan as indicated by their awareness of the computerization plans and ongoing processes in their own departments, and the future plans of e-Government as well as the Pilot Projects being implemented in other organizations, and the MoICT's training plans.

One participant even indicated his un-satisfaction with implementation of an e-government service and pointed out that the service has been given to the citizen with unclear instructions neither were the back-office cadre and processes changed to properly deal with it.

Participants also demonstrated a macro-level awareness of Jordan's need for e-government. They acknowledged the vision of HM the King on this subject, whereas e-government is becoming one of the international requirements for continuity of progress and communication with the developed world. They also stated many reasons why Jordan is adopting the e-government program, some were:

- Due to the difficulty of finding storage space for archived documents.
- For the international community to classify Jordan as a worthwhile market to invest in and to positively evaluate Jordan's institutions for their capabilities, credibility, and efficiency.
- E-government will help globally promote and market Jordan and improve its investment and trade image to the world.
- E-government being related to WTO, FTA, globalization and IPR, therefore it will promote Jordan's adherence to these international agreements.

Effect of e-government on organization and work

The upper management employee expected positive effect and impact of e-government on their job and organization. They expect e-mail to facilitate communications and information among departments and organizations and eliminate the need of face-to-face contact among employees.

They also expect e-government to enhance their monitoring process of employees' work and encourage them to do better work. Some pointed out that e-government will increase transparency of rules, punishments, and incentives, creating an atmosphere of fairness among all, also the fact that information will be available for all will decrease monopoly of information by certain persons which will increase creativity and incentives among employees to find alternative methods for distinguishing themselves and their work.

On the other hand, some were skeptical about e-government implementation and pointed out the need for drastic mentality change among employees, extensive training, as well as proper study of operations and laws before any implementation takes place.

B) Middle Management Employees

Most of the Jordanian mid-level management participants demonstrated little awareness of the e-government programs that are being implemented or any planned-for actions. They offered 'wild guesses' with the most concrete e-government related events for them being the ongoing computer training courses offered to employees and email use in some departments. Few contributed this to the fact that there were no seminars or other communications offered to them about e-government plans and 'citizens were not informed at the very onset of e-government'.

Participants indicated a micro-view of Jordan's need for e-government more related to their direct work than to the country as a whole. They acknowledged the vision of HM the King on this subject as e-Government being instrumental in increasing transparency and reducing the gap between the public and private sectors, as well as the provision of better service to the citizen, and reduce use of paper. One participant commented, "at the very beginning, requiring e-government means the existence of a problem that needs a solution".

On the other hand their general awareness of the possible effect and impact of e-government on their job and organization may be rated as very good. This awareness varied among employees, with those more aware of e-government issues being from departments already having computerized environment, internet and intranet, and email interaction. The discussion was concentrated on expected change in work environment, need for training, and resistance to change.

Effect of e-government on organization and work

The consensus among participants is that e-government will increase their productivity, reduce stressful contact with the public and consequently offer them better time management capability and faster service to citizens.

Also, none think that proper implementation of e-government will be an easy affair or quick. Some even expect resistance of employees to the evident change in habits and method of conducting work, but most agree that the government employee usually complies with any decision taken by higher authority – they go further to point out that in fact taking the decision and issuing the order to employees to comply with any e-government issue is the most important aspect in making e-government works.

All expect several impacts on themselves and their organizations and were elaborate in discussing them. Below are the major reported thoughts:

- a- e-government will offer better monitoring of employee's work, this in turn increases accountability and consequently the need for a good system of incentive and punishment.
- b- e-government will reduce the possibility of 'loosing' information and increase the need for a single source of information – a databank.
- c- Work environment will change, it will be computerized with Intranet and Extranet implementation. The employee (especially females) may even be able to work from home.
- d- Awareness raising is a must – should start with the government employees who are the corner stone of citizens' awareness

- e- To have government employee's buy-in, the employee must feel secure that e-government will not make one lose his/her job. This insecurity is prevalent among the older generation employees. Those have lots of experience that should not be wasted consequently this insecurity must be dealt with. On the other hand, this fear of losing one's job may be a positive incentive for employee to develop.
- f- E-government requires that the employee must be computer trained, and have his/her capabilities developed. This involves:
 - Possibility of refusal by employee to learn new things due to inappropriate timing of training (after work hours), taking for granted the security of his/her job, no incentives offered at work for those completing the training course, the age difference among training course participants, and the intrinsic shame-culture and unwillingness to confess not having the knowledge in the topic.
 - Need for providing a computer for each employee especially those trained on using one. Failing to do that will discourage employees in wanting to use computers in their work.
 - Departments with fewer employees will have the advantage, since usually those departments will be trained faster than the bigger ones.
- g- Increase in costs resulting from the need for providing the proper infrastructure, Internet and Intranet connection, computer and equipment, in addition to continuous upgrade of hardware and software.
- h- Fear of computers transcends the inability to use it to fear from entering wrong information, especially the financial and monetary, and being held responsible for it. The prevalent thinking is that such entry mistakes are hard to correct especially when digitally signed.
- i- Different government departments may be impacted differently depending on their type of operations and need for citizen interaction, secrecy and nature of information being monetary, sensitive, copyrighted, etc.

C) Lower Management Employees

Participants are not fully aware of the current e-Government program. Again, only employees of computerized organizations are somewhat aware of it and have vague knowledge that there are pilot projects to test the system.

Following are participants statements expressing their lack of awareness:

- We know that to enter into web sites has become an easy thing, however, not all sites are good or satisfy their objectives and require extensive modifications, however the daily newspaper sites are easy to enter and use.
- I am not aware of such a program.
- There is some talk in the department about training in our department.
- I only know that our organization began 5 years ago developing a system and entering all information into computers; today all transactions with investors are through the Internet, and through a local area network in our institution.

Effect of e-government on organization and work

Lower management employees' awareness of the impact of e-government on their work and organization was mainly derived from the discussions of the previous topic in the session and guided by the more knowledgeable in the group. As such the effects of e-Government on the participants' organization were generally seen as: developing web-based applications,

simplifying procedures, reducing interaction with citizens, and reducing time and effort for citizens. The more knowledgeable pointed out the following aspects:

- Improve work performance since it will make obtaining information faster, saving time and effort. Provide better monitoring of employees' work, and create incentives for being more careful at performing work accurately.
- Become familiar with each other departments' work procedures which would make work easier and saves time and effort. Creates transparency in procedures and dealings and eliminates monopoly of information.
- Spread knowledge for everyone, reduce and eventually eliminate tribalism, nepotism, and corruption.
- Increase in the volume of work as more use electronic transactions.

Participants indicated a fair awareness of the importance of e-government to Jordan. They acknowledged that it will promote investments and will make Jordan join the developed world. They also see that it is a way for Government looking to reduce 'wasta' in its departments, and to eliminate moodiness in dealing and provide easier and more convenient services to citizens.

3.3 Discussion Theme 3: Perception

What is your perception of the current e-Government program?

What do you think is good about e-Government?

What do you think might be negative about e-Government?

Could e-Government make a difference for you? For the average citizen?

A) Upper Management Employees

Jordanian upper management participants think that implementation of e-government to be a hard process but never-the-less necessary. They perceive many underlying base obstacles that will delay e-government such as inappropriateness of laws, lack of coordination among institutions, lack of proper execution of vision and plans, lack of accountability and proper sense of loyalty and sense of belonging to Jordan among employees.

On the other hand the consensus was that e-government is like the light at the end of the tunnel upon which all must concentrate. Its implementation will reveal the strong and weak points of governmental operations and it will require change that needs time but which will surely happen.

The positive and negative aspects of the participants' perception of e-Government were expounded as follows:

- Most connected e-government to the ease of obtaining correct information and simplification of procedures for citizens and employees alike, so they can conduct their work in less time, also e-government is perceived as a way to reduce paper work and provide the benefit of information sharing among the different governmental institutions, consequently to a better one-stop service to investors and citizens.
- Few think that some organizations will have to decrease its number of employees, but most believe that this perception is decreasing among employees and that their fear of loosing their jobs stems from their ignorance of e-government, in fact it could be an incentive for them to develop and train. Also, most participants perceive e-government as creating more jobs but of different nature needing English language, and different set of training and tools. It is a way to stop the brain and keep the expertise in Jordan, as well as create a new generation capable of working anywhere.
- E-Government is seen as a challenge and an opportunity at the same time evidenced by the following stated opinions:
 - Change takes time and is not easy to accomplish.
 - The financial requirements are great. The fast pace of computer hardware and software developments makes it difficult and costly to make use of new software.
 - Citizens' lack of awareness.

- The need is for users and not experts, as well as a way of preserving the experience of the longer-serving employees and not discarding it based on their illiteracy in computers.

B) Middle Management Employees

Jordanian Mid-Level management participants perceived e-government to be inductive of positive change into governmental cadre. Most corroborated this with their perception that e-government will be creating a competitive environment among employees spurring them to train themselves in computers, taking their work more seriously, have better sense of self-monitoring, and instilling in them the desire to be part of a “developed” community.

The positive and negative aspects of the participants’ perception of e-Government were expounded as follows:

- Most connected e-government to the ease of obtaining correct information in less time, for citizens and employees; and to the great benefit of information sharing among the different governmental institutions.
- Some also perceive e-government as a way to stop the brain drain if proper incentives are offered.
- From another perspective, some pointed out that e-government is suited to Jordanians, it goes hand in hand with the fact that the Jordanian employee does not like to get his/her hands ‘dirty’ while working. Also, it is now appealing to the younger generation wishing to learn and catch up with the developed world. Based on this perception, e-government is an opportunity that should be grasped and implemented fast.
- As far as e-government’s effect on ‘wasta’ and ‘tips’, some participants perceive that it will be instrumental in reducing them based on the fact that the citizen will be able to conduct the transaction online and will not need the ‘support’ of the employee whether being a manager or an office-boy.
- On the other hand, some participants perceive e-government as an expensive affair for the government requiring specialized human resources and extensive infrastructure that requires continuous update, and financing.
- Also, they conveyed the fear of change among the employees, and the fear of transparency where the quality of work of each employee will be exposed to all and the cover of the “group” is removed.
- Few actually think that some organizations will have to decrease its number of employees.
- Some also cautioned for the fact that e-government must not be perceived as something coming from outer space, requiring special skills and conveying special prestige. It should be a natural thing and part of the employee’s life, a tool for him/her to conduct work just like the pen in his/her hand.

C) Lower Management Employees

Most of the lower management participants perceived e-government to be mainly a tool for publishing information which in turn will positively affect work. As such advantages of e-Government to employees were seen as: increasing the knowledge of employees and thus their incentive for work; eliminating monopoly over information by some employees as the case currently; acquiring information, training of employees on modern techniques to keep up with external developments. Also e-government is perceived as a method for stability in decision-making since all decisions will be known and implemented the same in all governmental departments.

Few perceive that e-government will create equality among citizens as well as a more informed citizen who knows his rights and duties, and who will no longer accept doing things in the wrong way or using 'wasta'. Also, it is seen as preventing brain drain and containing the existing experiences in Jordan.

The major perceived disadvantages of e-Government were stated as: the loss of jobs due to restructuring and mergers; reduction of new jobs due to the increase cost of computers for new employees; and increased taxes on citizens to cover cost of e-Government;

The challenges that were seen were: the need to increase citizens' awareness on e-Government; the social traditions away from nepotism, which will create tensions for people who are only used to doing things in that manner; the current lack of trust in the government in general; and the employee's mentality and his fear of learning, and the mentality of the older employees who are indispensable, and must be trained.

Another perception was that there will be problems during practical implementation, and therefore the specificity of each department must be respected when planning for e-government and there must be awareness that e-Government does not mean that the citizen should not be physically present but that it depends on the nature of the transaction.

3.4 Discussion Theme 4: Suggestions

What are your suggestions on how to increase awareness and perception on e-Government?

Several suggestions were given to increase knowledge, awareness and perception. They basically revolved around awareness raising methods, as well as issues to encourage citizens and employees to adopt e-government and use it.

A) Upper Management Employees

Suggestions of upper management employees to increase awareness and perception on e-Government include:

a- Awareness raising

1. Raising awareness of employee and citizen alike of e-government concepts in a simple manner communicating its needs and benefits.
2. MoICT should shoulder the responsibility of raising the awareness of citizens of e-Government and training employees on the system in order that no obstacles in implementation are removed.
3. Planning for awareness raising is required on 3 levels: short term such as this workshops; medium term for training of employees and citizens in using the system properly; and long term plans to tie the system with educating future generations.
4. Government should be aware of social class contradictions in order to preserve the country's stability, and to protect the state from being challenged by the people.
5. There should be proper and highly accurate clarification of what is e-Government.

b- Encouraging citizens to use e-government

1. Citizens must feel the direct benefit of e-government and costs should be reduced since not every citizen could buy a computer or software.
2. Internet cafes and points of Internet access must be encouraged.
3. Instructions must become clear in order that the system is implemented easily. E-government must be very simple to use.
4. Must work towards gaining citizens' trust regarding Internet based services, and making it cost efficient.
5. People should be aware that there is high security in the transactions.
6. Citizens must feel that there e-government will not add to their financial burden or in the taxes they pay.

c- Encouraging use of e-government processes by employees.

1. Intensive follow-up is needed to make sure that e-Government is successful.
2. It should be communicated that e-Government does not mean employees losing their jobs.
3. Employees and people need to be kept in touch step by step regarding progress made by government to avoid any future clashes.
4. Employees must be trained on how to respond to citizens by email.
5. Employees must be socially guided into new ways of thinking and to make him/her customer oriented

6. Install a proper punishment/incentive system
7. E-government must be pushed top-down. There must be clear orders and instructions by higher authorities to implement e-government at work and to apply to all with no distinctions
8. All information and instructions must be available for all employees in all organizations.
9. Training courses must be offered to employees in a fair and transparent manner and offered during work hours
10. Special training must be given to employees who deal with citizens and especially in monetary terms.
11. Offer financial incentives such as salary allowance for computer literacy, as well as moral incentives including additional responsibilities and/or position change.

d- Infrastructure

1. Laws must be revised to accommodate e-government
2. In implementing e-government the specificity of each organization must be taken into account - Which operations are to be changed and for which will the citizen's physical presence be no longer needed
3. There is a need to address the specificity of each type of information, as well as the secrecy of the information of each organization - what should be published, circulated among employees and shared among organizations.
4. Development of infrastructure is a prerequisite for the success of e-Government.
5. Telecommunication infrastructure must be very strong
6. Related organizations must first be electronically connected, and a common database developed before offering service to citizens. We must not fly before walking.
7. E-government must be implemented in certain departments first and not in all at once.

Other suggestions:

1. English should become an employment pre-requisite for government employees for Internet use.
2. The current phase is one of ambitions, and the overall implementation vision is not clear and still requires a big effort to elaborate it.
3. There should be a specialized bank for handling payments with a high degree of security and according to international standards.
4. There is a need to balance the fact that only 5% of the citizens have Internet access and can afford this system.
5. E-Government will not solve the problems that face administrative reform, unless they are addressed at the basic level
6. Intensifying the role of the private sector in awareness raising and widening the base of computerization.

B) Middle Management Employees

Besides recommending streamlining of operations, re-engineering of processes of each department, studying information sharing needs, computerization and provision of infrastructure and human resources, unifying the hardware and software used among government organizations, review of all legal issues to remove contradictions and begin

implementing the e-commerce law, several suggestions were given regarding e-government awareness and implementation:

a- Awareness raising

1. Raising awareness of employee and citizen alike of ICT and benefits of using computers, e-government concept, and Internet. Special focus should be given to raising awareness and training the older employee.
2. It is a must to inform government employees of e-government – its content, technique, benefits, and plans.
3. Communicating to the public e-government concepts. Conducting a major awareness campaign through all media channels of e-government benefits, and how it will reduce costs.
4. e-government should be treated like any other product that requires marketing campaign. This could be similar to ‘shoot’, involves several Q&A competitions in newspapers, conducting opinion polls of e-government, etc. all for the purpose of incorporating e-government in the lives of people and making it as natural as possible to use.
5. Intensifying the role of the private sector in awareness raising and widening the base of computerization.

b- Encouraging citizens to use e-government

1. Offer special benefits for citizens when using e-government sites, such as no fee charged for applications submitted through the Internet.
2. Citizen must be able to experience the benefit of e-government. It is very important to present this benefit properly or else credibility will be lost. Careful and phased implementation is called for.
3. Citizen’s trust must be gained and s/he must be ensured that the provided information will be kept private and that it will be followed upon.
4. The term “e-government” conveys political connotation, and might be frightening to citizens, an alternative name should be considered.
5. Issuing special instructions prohibiting citizen from visiting department when possible, thus enforcing use of e-government site.

c- Encouraging use of e-government processes by employees. This can be done through

1. Clear orders and instructions by higher authorities to implement e-government at work,
2. Creating complete transparency in dealings with employees
3. Offering the proper moral and material incentives schemes,
4. Publishing the organizational chart with employees’ names and job descriptions of all involved departments.

d- Infrastructure

1. Development of a comprehensive databank to be used by all government departments but within security privileges, and ensuring proper monitoring of the accuracy and verity of entered and manipulated information.
2. Create a higher authority body responsible for interconnecting all departments together in terms of infrastructure and information sharing, as well as complementarities of operations.

C) Lower Management Employees

Suggestions of lower management employees were similar to the above mentioned by the previous two groups. It was concentrated in the need for awareness raising of citizens and employees, further training of employees, increasing accountability and installing a proper and fair system of incentives and punishments. Several suggestions were given regarding e-government awareness and implementation:

a- Awareness raising

1. Conducting a wide awareness campaign using TV, newspapers, magazines, satellite stations, as well as developing a clear set of instructions to be distributed now among all citizens frequenting the governmental organizations.
2. Intensifying the role of the private sector in awareness raising and supporting it in giving subsidized training to governmental employees and reaching far rural areas.
3. It is a must to inform government employees of e-government plans, continuously.
4. Especial awareness training about the importance of correct entry, and how to fill out forms correctly and without skipping any information must be given to employees and citizens.

b- Encouraging citizens to use e-government

1. Reduce tax or impose a new tax on smoking for example which returns will be used for e-government implementation and training.
2. Offer special benefits for citizens when using e-government sites, such as no fee charged for applications submitted through the Internet.
3. Increase access to Internet through establishing more IT centers in urban areas

c- Encouraging use of e-government processes by employees. This can be done through

5. Clear orders and instructions by higher authorities to implement e-government at work, and to train in e-government
6. Offering the employee, especially the manager, a complete orientation of how his work is connected to other departments
7. Creating complete transparency in dealings with employees and installing a proper accountability system and follow up
8. As a way to reduce the employee's fear of computers, any mistake must be correctly interpreted and the employee must be given the benefit of the doubt.

d- Infrastructure

1. There needs to be a proper link among all government workers in order to ease communication and to share and benefit from their experiences and to share knowledge about all developments especially in e-Government.
2. There need to be computers for each employee and linked on the Internet.

Further suggestions:

1. It is important to prevent skills from leaving the country, therefore it is important that management use the reward system to keep experienced employees in their departments especially that they have been trained and money spent on them.
2. Costs such as hospitality expenses ('diafeh') could be eliminated and employees given raises.

3. There needs to be proper implementation of the administrative hierarchy, whereby there are no hindrances of rewarding the excelling lower management employees.
4. There needs to be a paradigm shift in the employees thinking regarding his job security whether he works or not, in order that he concentrates more accurately on work, therefore the initial phase requires more supervision, and gradually it can be reduced.
5. Computer literacy must be a work requirement that will force people to learn.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, all participating employees at all levels perceive e-government as a positive change in the government, and optimism reigns. Most expect that proper e-government implementation to be somewhat hard and will take time but, in general, it will have very positive impacts on work processes, services offered to citizens, and the global image of Jordan. The most challenging perceived issue is raising the awareness of the citizen and employee of its concept, nature, benefits, and challenges.

Most employees are apprehensive about the change that e-government will introduce and resistance is expected. Fear of this change and what it entails of efforts in developing of one's skills and shifting of one's work ethics paradigm, exists among employees. Also the connection between e-government and restructuring, and losing one's job is also evident. But, most agree that e-government will have a positive effect on the employee in general, whether at his/her work or his/her private life, and that resistance to change will be reduced once employees are informed of e-government and its benefits.

E-government is also viewed by all as a tool for installing a most-needed scheme of accountability and incentives, transparency of rules and decision-making, and information sharing, as well as it being instrumental in reducing the stress level in serving the citizens.

Enthusiasm to learning new skills is there as long as training is offered during work hours and employee feels that s/he is making use of these newly learnt skills in developing his/her job. Also, what the moderators have noticed the fact that knowledge and awareness of participants has a 'theoretical' approach – not many actually know how e-government works in reality, and most showed strong interest in knowing how it technically works and how is security of information maintained. They want to see it in action and are curious to understand its underlying processes.

The level of knowledge and awareness of e-government varied among the different levels of management and among employees of the same level, with few not having any idea about e-government. In summary, the upper management employees have the better knowledge of e-government practical implementation, concept and theory, as well as the macro-view of e-government's impacts. The middle management employees are aware of its concept but not of how it is in action, they are also very aware of its possible micro-level impacts on their subordinates' work and theirs. The lower management employees' have the lowest level of knowledge of e-government's nature and their awareness of its impact is narrow and revolves around computerizing their work and publishing of information to citizens.

What is interesting to note is that some employees of organizations implementing some forms of e-government did not recognize these operations as e-government transactions. Another

issue worth mentioning is that e-government awareness and knowledge varied among employees of the different organizations depending on the employee's exposure to the computerized environment of his/her organization. Also, employees from departments already having computerized environment, Internet and intranet, and email interaction are more proud of their work and their organization, and are more loyal and have better sense of belonging. They were also among the most knowledgeable of e-government processes and impacts.

Employees at all levels agreed upon the fact that e-government should not be left as a choice to the employee. Clear orders and instructions by higher authorities to implement e-government at work, and to train in e-government are a must. The employee will execute any received order as long as it is serious and adopted by higher management.

Also, what became evident is the need to improve employees' information of e-government future plans and keep them informed of its progress. This may be instrumental in gaining their support. Also, e-government must be presented to them as something within their reach, away from prestige and special status considerations. It must be presented as a natural tool for them to make their job environment better and their service more appreciated.

Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol

e-Government Awareness Focus Groups

Focus Group Protocol

Introduction	10 minutes
Part I: Knowledge	20 minutes
Part II: Awareness	35 minutes
Part III: Perception	35 minutes
Part IV: Suggestions	20 minutes

Introduction

- Welcome note: Thank you for joining us for this focus group session, which is being conducted to better understand your knowledge, awareness, and perceptions of e-government.
- Objectives of the Focus Group: To assist the e-Government at MoICT in its communication planning efforts, specifically to help identify and define audience (stakeholder and audience segmentation), and identifying stakeholder perceptions
- Methodology to be used: We will have each person write their thoughts on half sheets, notes to be taken simultaneously by the note taker.

Part I: Knowledge

What do you know about e-Government?

What do you understand e-Government to be?

What is your “non-expert” definition of e-Government?

Probes:

- Different relationships between government and citizens
- New ways to share information within the government
- Government services on-line
- Communication between ministries via email

Where did you get your knowledge about e-Government?

Probes:

- Own department? Media (Newspapers, radio, TV)? Colleagues?

Part II: Awareness

Are you aware of the current e-Government program being implemented in Jordan?

What effect do you think this program will have on Jordan?

Probes:

- Improve the quality of government service delivery?
- Increase transparency of government?
- Improve efficiency in government processing?

What effect do you think this program will have on your organization’s work?

What effect do you think this program will have on your work?

Why do you think the decision was made for Jordan to adopt an e-government program?

- Probes: HM's IT initiative, part of Jordan's drive to be part of the global economy, improved trade, investments

Part III: Perception

What is your perception of the current e-Government program?

What do you think is good about e-Government?

What do you think might be negative about e-Government?

Could e-Government make a difference for you? For the average citizen?

Probes:

- Is it an opportunity? How?
- Is it a challenge? How?
- Is it something to be wary of? Why?

Part IV: Suggestions

What are your suggestions on how to increase awareness and perception on e-Government?

Appendix B

Detailed Focus Group Discussions In Arabic

جلسات النقاش للتوعية حول الحكومة الالكترونية دليل جلسات النقاش

20 دقيقة	مقدمة
20 دقيقة	الجزء الأول: معرفة
20 دقيقة	الجزء الثاني: وعي
50 دقيقة	الجزء الثالث: ادراك
10 دقائق	الجزء الرابع: الاقتراحات

المقدمة

- كلمة ترحيبية: شكرا لمشاركتكم معنا في هذه جلسة، التي نظمت لمحاولة فهم أفضل حول مدى معرفتكم، وعيك، و ادراكك للحكومة الالكترونية.
- الهدف: لمساعدة الحكومة الالكترونية في وزارة الاتصالات و تكنولوجيا المعلومات في الجهود التي تبذلها للتعريف بالحكومة الالكترونية وعلى وجه الخصوص، للمساعدة في تحديد و تعريف فئات المستخدمين ومن لهم دور فعال في هذه المبادرة بالإضافة لمفاهيمهم ازاءه
- المنهجية المتبعة: كل مشارك سيقوم بكتابة اراءه، تدون الملاحظات باستمرار من قبل مدون الملاحظات.

الجزء الأول: المعرفة

- ما الذي تعرفه عن الحكومة الالكترونية؟
- ما هو فهمك لماهية الحكومة الالكترونية؟
- ما هو تعريفك الشخصي "للحكومة الالكترونية"؟

تحفيزات:

- هل تكون علاقة مختلفة بين الحكومة و المواطنين؟
- هل هي طرق جديدة للمشاركة في المعلومات فيما بين الحكومة؟
- هل هي خدمات حكومية متوفرة على خط الانترنت؟
- هل هي اتصال بين الوزارات عن طريق البريد الالكتروني؟

- من أين حصلت على معرفتك المتعلقة بالحكومة الالكترونية؟

تحفيزات:

- من دائرتك التي تعمل بها؟ من خلال الاعلام (الصحف، الراديو، التلفاز)؟ عن طريق الزملاء؟

- هل لديك المام ببرنامج الحكومة الالكترونية الذي يطبق في الأردن حاليا؟

- ماذا نتوقع أن يكون أثر هذا البرنامج على الأردن؟

تحفيزات:

- هل سيؤثر في تحسين نوعية الخدمات الحكومية المقدمة؟
- هل سيؤثر في زيادة شفافية الحكومة؟
- هل سيؤثر في تحسين فعالية إجراءات العمل الحكومي؟

- ما الأثر الذي تتوقعه على عمل مؤسستك، نتيجة تطبيق هذا النظام؟

- ما الأثر الذي تتوقعه لهذا النظام على عملك؟

- لماذا في اعتقادك، اتخذ قرار في الأردن لتبني برنامج الحكومة الالكترونية؟

- تحفيزات: مبادرة جلاله الملك لتكنولوجيا المعلومات، طريقة لدخول الأردن في الاقتصاد العالمي، لتحسين التجارة، الاستثمار؟

الجزء الثالث: الادراك

- ما هو مدى ادراكك لبرنامج الحكومة الالكترونية الحالي؟

- ما هو في اعتقادك الجانب الايجابي في " الحكومة الالكترونية؟

- ما الذي تعتقده قد يكون سلبيًا في "الحكومة الالكترونية"؟

- هل تشكل "الحكومة الالكترونية" في نظرك عامل تغيير لك شخصيًا، للمواطن العادي؟

تحفيزات:

- هل تعد "الحكومة الالكترونية" فرصة؟ كيف؟
- هل تعتبر تحدي؟ كيف؟
- هل هو بالشئ الذي يجب الاحتياط و التنبه اليه، لماذا؟

الجزء الرابع: الاقتراحات

ما هي اقتراحاتك حول كيفية زيادة الوعي و الادراك حول موضوع الحكومة الالكترونية؟

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التاريخ : تموز 2002 / 31

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التاريخ : آب 1 / 2002

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رابعاً: اقتراحات:

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- التوعية الشاملة لجميع الموظفين في كل الدوائر حتى لا يخيف التغيير الموظفين لخسارة وظائفهم، واعتقد ان هنالك فجوة بين ما تفكر فيه الحكومة وبين فئات الناس المختلفة العاديين المستهدفين من تطبيق النظام ولذلك يجب توعية الناس خطوة بخطوة وذلك لتنسيق الابعاد الاجتماعية والتي قد تصل الى ابعاد سياسية وذلك حتى تتواصل الحكومة مع الشعب دون حصول اية معارضات.

- التاريخ : آب 7 / 2002

المكان: فندق راديسون ساس

الحضور: موظفي الادارة الدنيا

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التاريخ : آب 6 / 2002

الحضور : موظفي الادارة الوسطى

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التاريخ : آب 8 / 2002

المكان : فندق راديسون ساس

الحضور : موظفي الإدارة العليا

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- تخفف الحكومة الالكترونية من احتكار المعلومة عند بعض الاشخاص وبالتالي وجود المعلومات على الجهاز تكون للجميع ويتم المشاركة في المعلومات بين الجميع.
- تخفف الاحراجات في التعامل المباشر مع المواطنين وتخفف الوساطة والمحسوبية.
- تجعل هنالك رقابة اكبر على سير العمل والاجراءات.
- تطبيق القانون على الجميع والرقابة على الجميع مما يريح نفسية الموظف بانه سيكون على جهده وسيعاقب اذا اخطا، وبالتالي يحسن أدائه في العمل.
- وجود المعلومة نفسها عند الجميع تخلق تنافسية في الابتكار ومعرفة المزيد وبالتالي يصبح لدى الموظف دافع لمعرفة المزيد حتى يبقى متميز عن زملائه.
- شفافية الاجراءات وتسهيل المعاملات على الجميع.

(4) لماذا في اعتقادك يتبنى الاردن برنامج الحكومة الالكترونية؟

- مبادرة جلالة الملك عبد الله كانت من اجل فتح سوق جديدة وفتح افاق جديدة للعمل وخلق كفاءات مدربة للعمل في اي مكان من العالم.
- تقليل خروج الكفاءات من البلد بخلق جو منافس للخارج داخل البلد.
- الدخول الى سوق التجارة العالمي خاصة مع توقيع اتفاقية التجارة الحرة FTA.
- حتى نتماشى مع العالم المتقدم، وحتى لا تكون هنالك فجوة بيننا وبين العالم.

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الاجابات والنقاش:

- باعتقادي اننا في الاردن نقوم على توقيع اتفاقيات قد لا نكون في الاردن بحاجة لها، فجلالة الملك رجل شاب ومتحمس لعمل الكثير ولكن للأسف ومن التحديات التي تواجهنا وجود اشخاص لا ينفذون كما يريد جلالته. من المشاكل الكبرى التي تواجهنا عدم وجود منظومة قوانين متناغمة مع بعضها البعض، وايضا لا يوجد تناسب بين الضرائب المدفوعة والخدمات المقدمة للمواطن، فالمواطن يدفع ضريبة دخل وضريبة مبيعات ومسقات وانا كحكومة لا اقدم له شيء.
- من التحديات التي قد تواجهنا عدم وجود مسؤولين منتمين الى هذا البلد.
- كل بداية لها صعوبة ولا يجب ان نتفرج على العراقيين فقط فالشمعة في النفق المظلم افضل من لا شيء.
- ان الموظف خائف ولكن تخوفه ليس دون سبب بل لعدم وجود معرفة لديه.
- هنالك دور للقطاع الخاص في التدريب وتنمية الوعي لدى المواطنين، ونحن كحكوميين عينا لخدمة القطاع الخاص، والحكومة الالكترونية هي لخدمة المواطن ووضعت لتسهيل اجراءات المواطن.
- السؤال هو هل ننمي الاستثمار قبل الحكومة الالكترونية ام الحكومة الالكترونية قبل الاستثمار، البيضة من الجاجة ام الجاجة من البيضة.
- خصوصية كل دائرة من الدوائر وسرية المعلومات هي من التحديات التي يجب الانتباه اليها.

- من السلبات تخوف الموظف من اعادة الهيكلة، وهذا التخوف طبيعي نتيجة ظروف الحياة وقساوتها، ونتيجة البطالة وعدم الامان الوظيفي.
- قد يكون الخوف عامل ايجابي لتحفيز الموظف للتدريب والتطور وتطوير نفسه.
- توفير الوقت والجهد على المواطنين.
- توعية الموظف تؤدي الى توعية المجتمع بشكل عام وهذه ايجابية من الايجابيات للحكومة الالكترونية.
- خلق جيل جديد للعمل داخل الاردن وخارج الاردن وبالتالي القضاء على البطالة، فالالة عندما دخلت المصانع كان هنالك تخوف من انها ستقلل استخدام العمال، ثم صار العكس حيث انها زادت استخدام العمال حيث احتاجت الالة الى ناس وفنيين لادارتها، وتم تدريبهم ايضا على الالات.

رابعاً: اقتراحات:

- يجب عمل حملة اعلامية لتوعية المواطنين بما يجري.
- عند عمل التوعية للموظفين يجب ان يتم تحديد الاشخاص المرسلين لل E-mail وايضا لمن يرسل حتى لا ياتي كم هائل من المراسلات الالكترونية دون داعي، او ان تتم مخاطبة مع غير الشخص او الموظف المسؤول.
- يجب ان تكون القناعة على اعلى المستويات الادارية وذلك من اجل نقلها الى المستويات الادنى.
- يجب تبسيط الاجراءات حتى يستطيع المواطن الامي فهمها.
- يجب زيادة الثقة بين المواطن والدولة حتى يستطيع المواطن الاقتناع بالنظام، خاصة انه لحد الان لا توجد دراسة منشورة للعامة تبشر بنتائج الحكومة الالكترونية.
- باعتقادي ان المواطن يفكر بالضرائب التي يدفعها بالمقابل، لهذا يجب ان تتناسب الضرائب مع نوعية الخدمات المقدمة.
- يجب عمل دورات على مستوى عالي من الدقة لتدريب الموظفين على طريقة التحوار مع المواطنين، وخاصة موظفين الضريبة الذين يتعاملون مع جيوب المواطنين.
- يجب توعية المواطنين وخاصة في القرى النائية وعمل مراكز تكنولوجية لهم، فنحن لا نريد ان نقفز كالعادة لهذا يجب ان يكون هنالك بنية تحتية صلبة لتطبيق هكذا نظام، فيجب ان يكون هنالك اصلاح للشبكات والكهرباء وهذه البنية التحتية يجب توفيرها قبل نشر النظام على المواطنين فالهواتف الخلوية لم يستطع احد التكلم فيها عندما اعلنت نتائج التوجيهي..
- يجب تسهيل الخدمات على المواطنين ليس في عمان فقط بل في جميع المملكة.
- يجب ان تنماشى الحكومة الالكترونية مع تلبية الحاجات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية، وتقليل المصاريف على المواطن.
- رفع كافة الرسوم والضرائب عن هذه الاجهزة وان يتم دعم هذه الحكومة مثل دعم الخبز، فسعر الاجهزة في الاردن جدا اعلى من سعرها في اي مكان حتى في غزة المحاصرة الاجهزة ارخص من الاردن. ان تكون اوقات تدريب الموظفين خلال اوقات الدوام الرسمي، حيث ان لدينا مشكلة في تدريب الموظفين بعد الدوام الرسمي، وان تعتبر هذه الدورات جزء من دوامه.
- اعطاء حوافز للموظفين الذين يتدربون فنحن مثلاً نعطي 25 دينار حالياً علاوة للموظف الذي يستخدم الحاسوب.
- يجب ان يكون لدينا بنية قوية، وان يكون هنالك دور اكبر لشركة الاتصالات في هذا الموضوع، حيث انني لا زلت اعاني من عدم استطاعتي شبك الانترنت في منطقة بدر الجديدة، وان يتم الاسراع في اصلاح شبكات البنية التحتية حتى لا يواجه النظام اية عراقيل دون داعي.
- يجب ان يشعر الموظف بالامان وان يكون هنالك حوافز ليست فقط مادية بل معنوية ايضا باعطائه مسؤوليات اكثر او منصب اكبر.
- يجب ان يكون هنالك ايمان بالفكرة ومتابعة لتحقيقها وخاصة من المستويات العليا.
- يجب التوعية والتغيير ونحن نعمل على ذلك واعتقد اننا في الاتجاه الصحيح، حيث ان بطاقة الفيزا لم يكن لها استعمال في السابق اما الان فاصبحت من الضروريات، فكل شيء مع الممارسة يصبح اسهل.
- يجب ان يكون هنالك ثواب وعقاب، فعندما يتم ارسال الموظف الى دورة يجب ان يقدم تقرير عن هذه الدورة وان يقوم بابلغ زملائه عن المعرفة الجديدة التي اكتسبها.
- باعتقادي ان من اهم ما يجب وجوده هو القرار الاداري الحازم والواضح والمطبق على الجميع دون تمييز
- يجب ان يشعر المواطن بالامان بانه لن يكون هنالك اية اعباء مادية اضافية عليه.
- يجب ان يكون هنالك عدالة في الدورات التي تعطى للموظفين، والشفافية في معرفة المعلومات للجميع.
- يجب تدريب الموظف بشكل دائم فهناك امور لا يتم عملها بسرعة، والمواطن لا يتقبل التحديث والتغيير السريع ولكن مع الوقت تصبح الامور اسهل.
- يجب تعديل التشريعات بشكل يتناسب مع التطبيق العملي للحكومة الالكترونية.
- ان يتم نشر جميع البيانات والمعلومات على كافة الدوائر والمحافظات.
- عمل تحفيز وتشجيع للمواطنين، وايضا تشجيع القيام على فتح مراكز للانترنت، مثل اعفاء بعض من يقومون على فتح هذه المراكز من ضرائب معينة.

- يجب ان يشعر المواطن والموظف بالفائدة من تطبيق النظام والا ستتم معارضة النظام بشكل كبير.
- اعتقد ان القطاع الخاص هو شريك استراتيجي في عملية التوعية وهو اقدر من الحكومة في ذلك، وبالتالي يجب ان يعمل على مساعدة الدولة ومساعدة القطاع المحلي، فالقطاع الخاص في هذه الحالة يقوم بالترويج لنفسه ولشركاته ايضا فالفائدة تعم على الجميع.
- يجب توعية الموظف وتغيير عقليته من اجل خدمة المواطن بطريقة جيدة لان راتبه في نهاية الشهر ياتي م المواطن.
- يجب ان يتم عمل دورات ارشاد وتوعية للموظفين بحيث يتم الغاء الكثير من العقد النفسية الموجودة لدى الموظف تجاه المواطن مثل عقده من ان المواطن غني ولا تجب خدمته.
- باعتقادي ان هنالك نص في قانون الشركات بان يخصص 1% من ربح الشركات المساهمة العامة لدعم البحث العلمي والتدريب، لهذا يجب تفعيل هذا البند بشكل اكبر وملمس.
- يجب اعطاء دورات للموظفين على كيفية الرد على المواطنين من خلال الانترنت.
- يجب الانتباه الى سرية معلومات كل دائرة وخصوصيتها لهذا يجب الاحتياط الى ماهية المعلومات التي يجب نشرها الى الجمهور، ويجب ان يكون هنالك تعاون بين جميع الدوائر والوزارات في هذا الشأن، وان يكون هنالك حدود للمعلومات وبالرغم من الحدود التي وضعها القانون للمعلومات ولكن يجب الانتباه الى ماذا سينشر الى الجمهور وما هي المعلومات التي سيتم تداولها بين موظفي الدائرة الواحدة والدوائر المختلفة في كافة الوزارات والدوائر.